

**THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN
IN THE COOK ISLANDS**

COUNTRY FACTSHEET: SEPTEMBER 2025

Factsheet on the situation of children in the Cook Islands

Data Brief: September 2025

This country factsheet provides a snapshot of the situation of children, adolescents, and youth in the Cook Islands focusing on UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific regional accelerators.

The factsheet gives an overview of the most recent child-related statistics, drawing on internationally comparable indicators available through global databases. Indicators have been chosen based on the availability of historical data and geographic coverage, with priority to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators.

Highlights

The Cook Islands has been classified as a High-Income Economy since 2020. The economy grew by 14.0% in 2023 and 14.0% in 2024. It is forecasted to continue growing by 10.4% in 2025.

Children represent 29% of the projected 13,300 population in 2025. Children between the ages of 0 to 4 years represent 6% of the population.

Data is lacking on antenatal and postnatal care visits for mother and child. However, all pregnant mothers have access to a skilled attendant at birth as well as delivery in health facilities.

Most children received 3 doses of the DTP vaccine (75%) and 2 doses of the measles vaccine (79%) in 2023.

There is insufficient information on child health particularly on the incidence of stunting, wasting, underweight, and overweight.

The factsheet contains six sections:

- 1) Demographic and Economic Overview
- 2) Primary Health Care
- 3) Adolescent girls' and boys' skills, learning, and employability
- 4) Violence against children
- 5) National Social Protection Systems
- 6) Water, disaster, and climate vulnerability

Data on school completion and out-of-school rates are not readily available. Learning outcomes show moderate performance: in 2021, 50% of Year 4 students met minimum reading standards and 58% met numeracy benchmarks, improving to 75% in numeracy by Year 6

The same is for data on violent child discipline, child marriage, child labour, and multidimensional poverty.

Public spending in social sectors as a percent of total national budget is around 6.3% for Education, 6.7% for Health, and 6.7% for Social Protection.

Around 100% of the population is covered by at least one social protection benefit. However, there is insufficient information to explain the coverage of poor persons or those with severe disabilities.

School access to water for drinking, sanitation, and hygiene services, is above 99%.

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Children in the Cook Islands

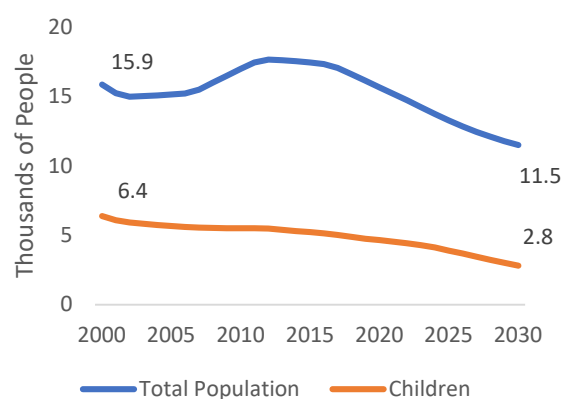


Demographic and Economic Overview

Demography¹

	Value	Year
Total Population (in thousands)	13.3	2025
% of Total population		
Children 0-4	6	2025
Children 0-17	29	2025
Children and Adolescents 0-19	33	2025
Number of births (in thousands)	0.1	2025
Population growth rate (% annual change)	-3.4	2025
Urban population (%)	76	2023
Rural population (%)	24	2023

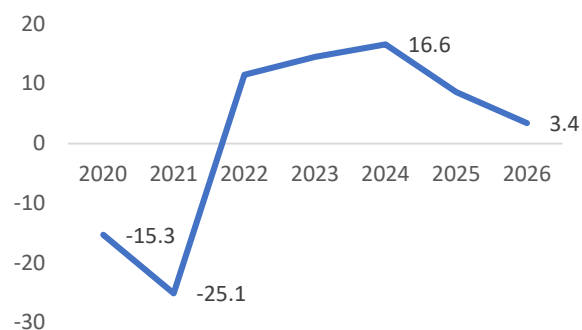
Population Trends and Projections (2000-2030)



Economy²

	Value	Year
Classification of the economy by income	High Income Economy	2020
GDP per capita nominal (in USD)	25,651.0	2025
Inflation (%)	4.6	2024

GDP Per Capita Growth (2019-2025)



Children in the Cook Islands

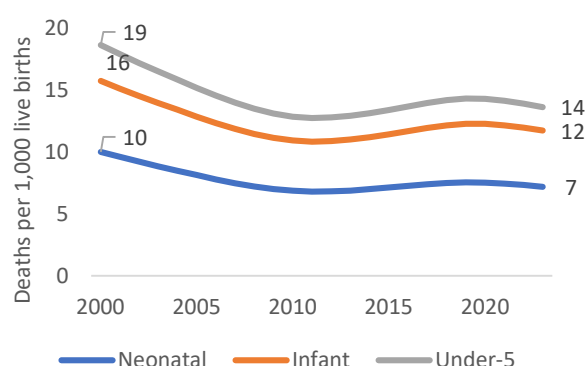


Primary Health Care and Nutrition

Mortality³

	Value	Year
Mortality rates (per 1,000 live births)		
Neonatal	7	2023
Infant	12	2022
Under-5	14	2023
Under-5 deaths		
	3	2023
Crude suicide rate per 100,000 population, among adolescents 15-19 years		
Total	Data Not Available	
Female	Data Not Available	
Male	Data Not Available	

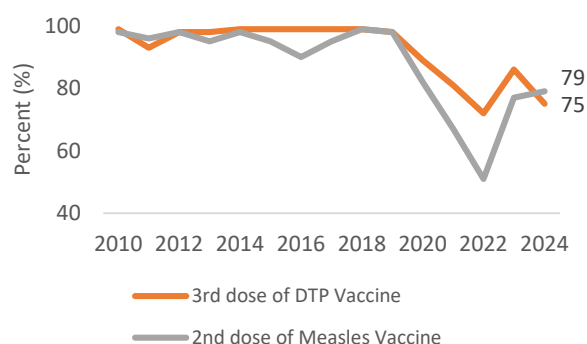
Trends in Mortality Rates



Maternal and Child Health⁴

	Value	Year
% of Women (15-49 years with a live birth in the last 2 years)		
(4+) Antenatal care visits	Data Not Available	
Skilled attendant at birth	100	2009
Deliveries in health facilities	100	2009
% of Children (0-2 years)		
received 3 doses of DTP vaccine	75	2024
Received 2 doses of measles vaccine	79	2024

Trends in Immunization, by Vaccine



Nutrition⁴

	Value	Year
% of Children (under 5 years)		
Stunting	Data Not Available	
Wasting	Data Not Available	
Underweight	Data Not Available	
Overweight	Data Not Available	
Minimum dietary diversity (6-23 months)		
	Data Not Available	
Exclusive Breastfeeding (first 6 months)		
	Data Not Available	

Data Not Available

Children in the Cook Islands

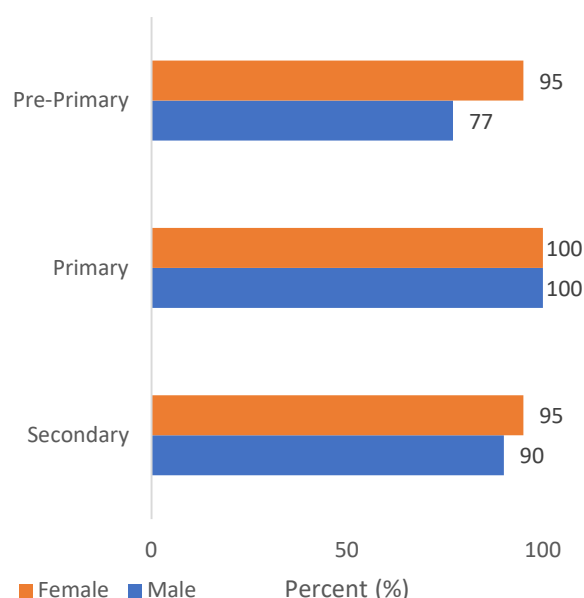


Learning, Skills, and Employability

Learning⁵

	Value	Year
School net attendance (% of children of the relevant age groups for the education level)		
Pre-Primary	86	2020
Primary	100	2020
Secondary	90	2020
School completion (% of children of the relevant age groups for the education level)		
Primary	Data Not Available	
Secondary	Data Not Available	
Out-of-school children (% of children of the relevant age groups for the education level)		
Primary	Data Not Available	
Secondary	Data Not Available	
Educational Attainment (% of students who are meeting the minimum expected standard)		
Year 4 Numeracy	58	2021
Year 4 Reading	50	2021
Year 6 Numeracy	75	2021
Year 6 Reading	82	2021

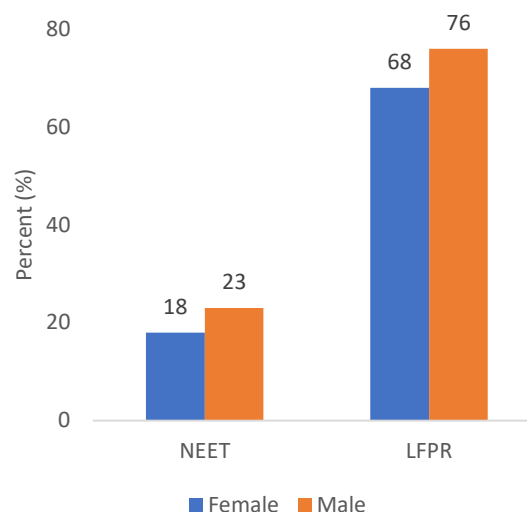
Net School Attendance by Gender



Employment, Education and Training⁶

	Value	Year
Not in education, employment, or training (NEET) (15-19 years)		
	20	2023
Female	18	2023
Male	23	2023
Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) (15+)		
	72	2023
Female	68	2023
Male	76	2023
Youth Unemployment rate (15-24 years)		
	4	2019
Female	Data Not Available	
Male	Data Not Available	

NEET, LFPR, and Youth Unemployment



Children in the Cook Islands



Violence Against Children

Violence⁷

	Value	Year
Violent child discipline (% of Children aged 1-4)		
Any form of violent discipline	Data Not Available	
Female	Data Not Available	
Male	Data Not Available	

Child marriage (% of women and men aged 20-24)		
Women –		
Married before 18	Data Not Available	
Married before 15	Data Not Available	
Men –		
Married before 18	Data Not Available	

Child labour (% of Children aged 5-14)		
Total	Data Not Available	
Female	Data Not Available	
Male	Data Not Available	

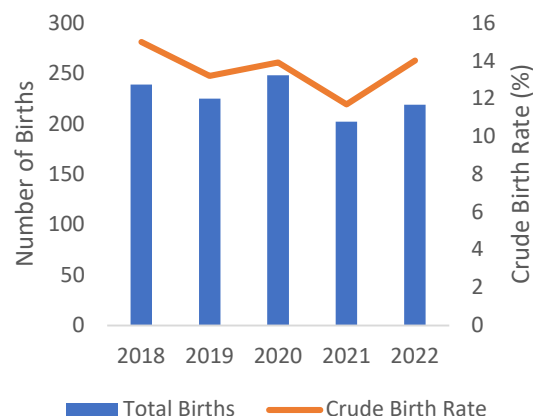
Data Not Available

Birth Registration⁷

	Value	Year
Birth registration (% of Children under 5 years)		
Total	100	2021
Female	100	2021
Male	100	2021

Number of Births and Crude Birth Rate

Vital Statistics, Cook Islands Statistics Office



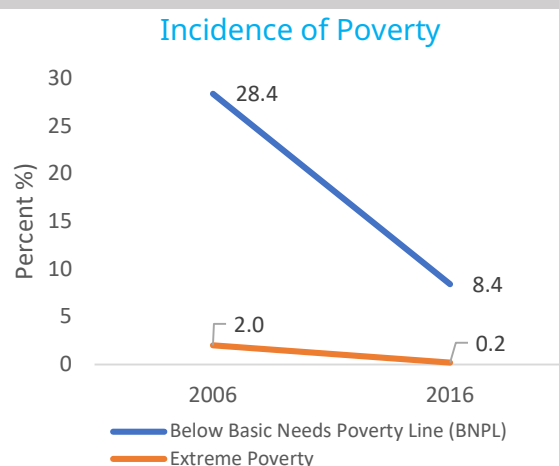
Children in the Cook Islands



Social Protection Systems

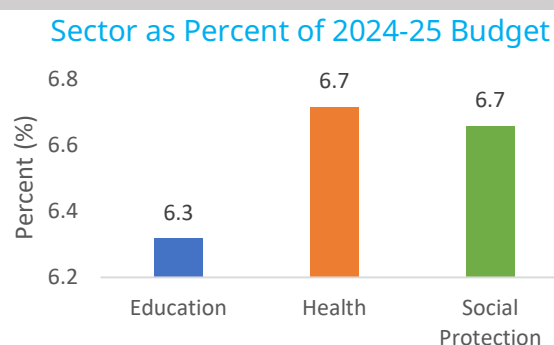
Poverty⁸

	Value	Year
Monetary Poverty		
International extreme poverty line \$3.00/day	Data Not Available	
Population below the Basic Needs Poverty Line		
	8.4	2016
Global Multidimensional Poverty Index		
	Data Not Available	
Population in multidimensional poverty (%)	Data Not Available	



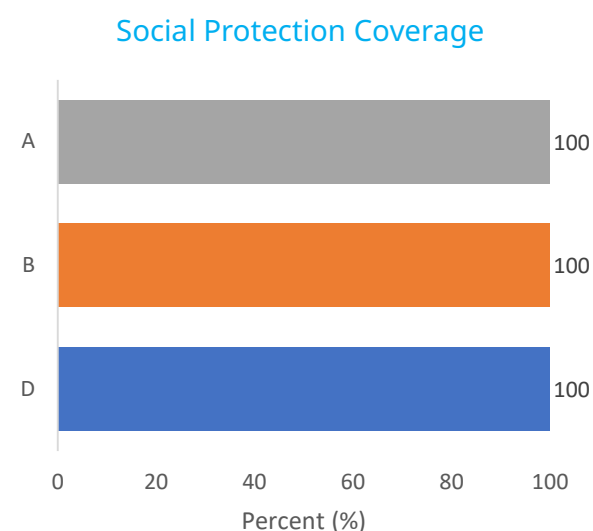
Public Expenditure on Essential Services⁹

	Value	Year
Public Expenditure as % of GDP		
Education	14	2024-25
Health	15	2024-25
Social Protection	15	2024-25



Social Protection Coverage⁹

	Value	Year
% Coverage		
Population covered by at least one benefit (A)	100	2022
Proportion of children covered by social protection (B)	100	2019
Mothers with newborns receiving cash benefit (C)	Data Not Available	
Children/HHs receiving Child/Family cash benefits (D)	100	2022
Proportion of Poor Population receiving Social Assistance Cash Benefit (E)	Data Not Available	
Persons with severe disabilities receiving benefits (F)	Data Not Available	



Children in the Cook Islands

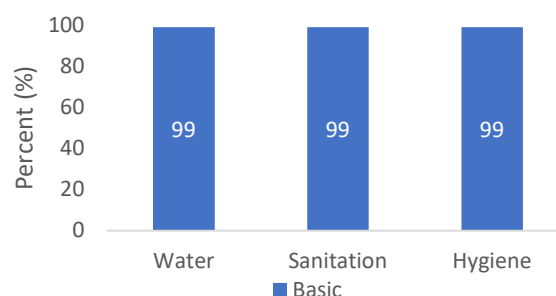


Water Security and Climate

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene¹⁰

	Value	Year
Household Coverage (%)		
Basic drinking water	>99	2024
Basic sanitation	99	2024
Basic hygiene	Data Not Available	
School Coverage (%)		
Basic drinking water	>99	2023
Basic sanitation	>99	2023
Basic hygiene	>99	2023

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene School Coverage



Disaster and Climate Vulnerability¹¹

	Value	Year
INFORM Risk Index*	Data Not Available	
Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI)**	Data Not Available	
Child-sensitive climate policies	1) Cook Islands Climate Change Policy 2018-2028 2) The Cook Islands 2nd Joint National Action Plan 2016-2020	

Data Not Available

**The INFORM Risk Index identifies countries that are at a high risk of humanitarian crisis and therefore more likely to require international assistance. Released in 2024. **The CCRI ranks countries based on children's exposure to climate and environmental shocks.*

Data Sources

1 Demography Data: UN Population Div, World Bank Data, and CIA World Factbook for Cook Islands 2025
 2 Economic Data: Pacific Community, and ADB Outlook September 2025
 3 Mortality Data: UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, and WHO Data 2025
 4 Maternal, Child Health, & Nutrition Data: UNICEF Data 2025
 5 Learning/ Education Data: Cook Islands Education Statistics Report 2020, and UNICEF Data 2025
 6 Employment Data: UNICEF Data, and ILO Country Profile for Cook Islands 2025

7 VAC Data: Vital Statistics and Population Estimates June Quarter 2023, Cook Islands Statistics Office
 8 Poverty Data: ADB Report 2021 on Proposed Policy-Based Loan and Precautionary Financing Option Loan
 9 Essential Services & Social Protection Coverage Data: 2024-25 Budget Estimates Cook Islands Government, and ADB
 10 Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene Data: WHO/UNICEF JMP Data 2025
 11 Climate Vulnerability: Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre (DRMKC), UNICEF Data, and National Sources 2025

For more information please visit
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